

Burma's borders into Thailand, India, and Bangladesh;

Whereas fighting between the Tatmadaw and several ethnic armed groups continues, with government forces committing increased abuses against ethnic Karen, Kayah, Kachin, Chin, Rakhine, Shan, and Rohingya minority populations;

Whereas the Tatmadaw restricted freedom of movement, telecommunications, and the media, limiting access to information to and from Burma during a political and public health crisis;

Whereas senior generals of the Tatmadaw have been sanctioned by the United States Government for serious human rights abuses and for their role in the coup and are subject to ongoing investigations into their conduct by the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice;

Whereas, on January 28, 2021, the Union Election Commission rejected allegations by the Tatmadaw that fraud played a significant role in determining the outcome of the November 2020 elections;

Whereas Burma's November 8, 2020, elections resulted in the National League for Democracy party securing enough seats in Parliament to form the next government;

Whereas the Tatmadaw has a long history of committing atrocities against the people of Burma, including the targeting of specific ethnic groups; and

Whereas senior United States officials have committed to making a determination of whether such atrocities constitute genocide: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the people of Burma in their ambition for democracy, sustainable peace, and genuine ethnic and religious reconciliation, and the realization of internationally recognized human rights for all, including for ethnic and religious groups whose human rights have been violated repeatedly and who have been disenfranchised historically;

(2) calls on the Tatmadaw to—

(A) immediately and unconditionally release all political prisoners detained as a result of the military coup on February 1, 2021;

(B) immediately restore all forms of communications, including access to the internet without surveillance;

(C) immediately end the use of violence and allow for a legal process for accountability and justice for those unlawfully detained, injured, and killed by the Tatmadaw;

(D) remove all impediments to free travel that have been imposed as a result of the coup;

(E) return to power all members of the civilian government elected in the November 8, 2020, elections and allow them to fulfill their mandate without impediment;

(F) allow for freedom of expression, including the right to protest, peaceful assembly, press freedom, and freedom of movement; and

(G) allow unfettered reporting from local, national, and international media;

(3) calls on social media companies to suspend the accounts of the Union Solidarity and Development Party and the Tatmadaw that have used their platforms to spread disinformation, fear, and psychological violence;

(4) supports the use of all diplomatic, economic, and development tools to ensure that vulnerable groups, including ethnic and religious groups, as well as all children, youth, and teachers in educational settings are safe, and schools and universities are not targeted for attacks or use by the Tatmadaw;

(5) expresses grave concern for the safety and security of hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons (referred to in this resolution as "IDPs") and refugees who have

been displaced by the Tatmadaw and now face challenging conditions in camps;

(6) expresses grave concern for the 3,000,000 people of Burma who are in need of humanitarian aid, including the 223,000 IDPs in Burma, of which 165,000 remain in the south-east, adding to those already displaced in Rakhine, Chin, Shan and Kachin states;

(7) encourages Burma's neighboring countries, including Thailand, India, and Bangladesh, to meaningfully assist refugees who have fled and continue to flee the Tatmadaw;

(8) calls on the President, the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of Defense to fully implement section 7008 of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2021 (division K of Public Law 116-260) and any similar or successor law governing United States foreign assistance following a coup d'etat, and to immediately—

(A) impose targeted restrictions aimed at the Tatmadaw, military-owned or controlled enterprises, and those responsible for the February 1, 2021, coup;

(B) work with the international community, including at the United Nations Security Council, with United States allies in the region, and with the Association of South-east Asian Nations, to condemn the coup, delegitimize the junta, and take steps to ensure that international economic engagement in Burma does not contribute to human rights abuses and benefit individuals connected to the coup;

(C) support conditionality on diplomatic, economic, and security relations with Burma, including using the voice and vote of the United States at multilateral development institutions, until all those detained in the February 1, 2021, coup are released and there has been a full restoration of civilian-controlled parliament respecting the November 8, 2020, election results;

(D) utilize the United States Government's position on the United Nations Security Council to bring about greater international cooperation in the pursuit of justice and accountability in Burma;

(E) legitimize and provide assistance to the National Unity Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the National Unity Consultative Council, the Civil Disobedience Movement in Myanmar, and other entities promoting democracy in Burma, while simultaneously denying legitimacy and resources to the junta;

(F) promote national reconciliation among the diverse ethnic and religious groups in Burma;

(G) counter support to the junta by the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation; and

(H) secure the restoration of democracy, the establishment of an inclusive and representative civilian government and a reformed military reflecting the diversity of Burma and under civilian control, and the enactment of constitutional, political, and economic reform in Burma; and

(9) urges the Secretary of State to swiftly conduct an Interagency Process and issue a determination as to whether the targeting and murder of innocent civilians by the Tatmadaw during and after the February 1, 2021, coup d'etat, specifically those associated with ethnic and religious groups in Burma, and crimes committed by the Tatmadaw against such ethnic and religious groups prior to the coup constitute crimes against humanity or genocide.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN BELARUS

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 167, S. Res. 345.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 345) expressing the sense of the Senate on the political situation in Belarus.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution which had been reported from the Committee on Foreign Relations with an amendment to strike all after the resolving clause and insert the part printed in *italic*, and with an amendment to strike the preamble and insert the part printed in *italic*, as follows:

Whereas the United States Senate has long maintained strong bipartisan concern regarding the troubling lack of democracy in Belarus, highlighted by the passing of the Belarus Democracy Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-347; 22 U.S.C. 5811 note);

Whereas the 116th Congress, as referenced in H.R. 8438, the Belarus Democracy, Human Rights, and Sovereignty Act of 2020, and Senate Resolution 658, which both passed with unanimous support, stated its deep concern regarding the fraudulent election in Belarus on August 9, 2020;

Whereas on September 17, 2020, the Moscow Mechanism of the human dimension of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was invoked by 17 participating states with regard to credible reports of human rights violations before, during, and after the presidential election of August 9, 2020, in Belarus;

Whereas, following Alyaksandr Lukashenka's inauguration on September 23, 2020, the United States, the European Union, numerous European Union member states, the United Kingdom, and Canada announced they did not recognize the legitimacy of the election results;

Whereas after the August 9, 2020 presidential election, the Government of Belarus responded to the resulting peaceful protests, the largest in the country's history, with a violent crackdown, including the detention of more than 10,000 peaceful protestors, according to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus;

Whereas the Government of Belarus, under the misrule of the Lukashenka regime, continues to engage in a pattern of clear and persistent violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms and disrespects the basic principles of democratic governance by subjecting tens of thousands of pro-democracy political activists, peaceful protesters, and ordinary citizens to harassment, beatings, abductions, forced deportations, and imprisonment and by committing acts of transnational repression to punish any dissent expressed by Belarusian citizens;

Whereas the Lukashenka regime continues to silence independent media, such as Nasha Niva, tut.by, and Belsat, and has unlawfully raided the offices of media outlets, including Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and arrested journalists;

Whereas on September 11, 2020, then-Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun said that "we stand by our long-term commitment to support the sovereignty of Belarus as well as its territorial integrity, as the aspirations of the Belarusian people to determine their own path remains in front of us";

Whereas on May 23, 2021, the Lukashenka regime forced a commercial airliner flying between

two European Union member states to land in Minsk in order for the regime to arrest journalist Raman Pratasevich and his partner Sofia Sapega, a violation of international law resulting in near universal condemnation from the international community and coordinated sanctions by the United States, the United Kingdom, and the European Union;

Whereas on May 28, 2021, the White House announced the re-imposition of full blocking sanctions against nine Belarusian state-owned enterprises and announced a new Executive order to increase sanctions on elements of the Lukashenka regime;

Whereas the Lukashenka regime has actively encouraged or forced at gunpoint more than 4,000 migrants from other countries to cross through Belarus into European Union member states Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland, amounting to people smuggling and obliging these countries to declare a state of emergency;

Whereas on June 9, 2021, the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate held a hearing regarding the political situation in Belarus, in which United States Ambassador to Belarus Julie Fisher testified that “Despite the oppression, the violence, and the turmoil that followed the events of the past year provide glimmers of hope. A new generation of brave Belarusians, with courageous women at the front, have emerged. They represent a Belarus determined to chart its own path. They represent a Belarus in which wearing a red and white dress, hanging a flag, or playing a particular song will not result in torture, forced confessions, or even death.”;

Whereas on July 27, 2021, President Biden met Belarusian opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya at the White House and declared that “The United States stands with the people of Belarus in their quest for democracy and universal human rights.”;

Whereas on August 9, 2021, President Biden—
(1) announced an Executive order authorizing the imposition of blocking sanctions on certain sectors of the Belarus economy, including the potash, tobacco products, and construction sectors; and

(2) pursuant to such executive order and Executive Order 13405, issued additional sanctions on Belarusian individuals and entities, including Belaruskali (a state-owned potash fertilizer company) and the Belarus National Olympic Committee; and

Whereas Belarusian opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya continues to represent the widely shared desire of the Belarusian people for free and fair elections and democracy: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, [That the Senate—

[(1) continues, on the first anniversary of the illegitimate presidential election in Belarus on August 9, 2020, to refuse to recognize Alyaksandr Lukashenka as the legitimately elected leader of Belarus;

[(2) condemns Lukashenka's ongoing crackdown on members of the pro-democracy movement, senior members of the Coordination Council, peaceful protesters, employees from state-owned enterprises participating in strikes, independent election observers, independent journalists and bloggers, medical professionals, professors, teachers, athletes, and cultural leaders;

[(3) continues to call for the fulfillment by the Government of Belarus of Belarus' freely undertaken obligations as an Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) member and accept the OSCE's offer to facilitate a national dialogue and fully participate in the OSCE process;

[(4) calls for new presidential and parliamentary elections to be held in Belarus, conducted in a manner that is free and fair according to OSCE standards and under the supervision of OSCE observers and independent domestic observers;

[(5) welcomes the United States Government's close coordination with the European Union, the United Kingdom, Canada, other allied and partner countries, and international organizations to promote the principles of democracy, the rule of law, and human rights in Belarus and encourages continued coordination to apply maximal pressure on the Lukashenka regime;

[(6) continues to call for the immediate release, without preconditions, of all political prisoners in Belarus;

[(7) welcomes the recent release of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) journalists Aleh Hruzdilovich and Ina Studzinskaya and calls for the unconditional release of all political prisoners and journalists detained on dubious charges, including opposition candidates Sergei Tikhanovsky and Viktar Babaryka, pro-democracy activist Maria Kalesnikava, and RFE/RL journalist Ihar Losik;

[(8) condemns the forced diversion of Ryanair Flight 4978 to arrest Raman Pratasevich and his partner Sofia Sapega, which violated international civil aviation law and risked the lives of innocent passengers and crew, and calls for their immediate unconditional release;

[(9) commends the bravery of Belarusians who have created innovative ways to protest Lukashenka's autocracy and applauds the Belarusian diaspora's efforts to maintain international focus on the deteriorating political situation;

[(10) lauds the extraordinary support offered by the Governments of Lithuania, Ukraine, and Poland to support the people of Belarus, including support for the political opposition, accommodation of political refugees, and backing a free media;

[(11) calls on the Lukashenka regime to immediately halt exploiting and instrumentalizing migrants and to stop directing individuals to Lithuania's borders;

[(12) welcomes the Executive order announced on August 9, 2021, that applies additional sanctions on the Lukashenka regime and urges the Biden Administration to consider all economic, political, and diplomatic tools at its disposal to support democracy in Belarus;

[(13) welcomes the European Union sanctions imposed on the Lukashenka regime and urges the United States to continue to coordinate additional measures with the European Union; and

[(14) emphasizes that the United States supports the people of Belarus in their quest to maintain their sovereignty, choose their own leadership, and live in freedom, and recognizes the extensive efforts of the Belarusian opposition to coordinate efforts with the United States, the European Union, the OSCE, and the United Nations to bring free and fair elections to its people.]]

That the Senate—

(1) continues, on the first anniversary of the illegitimate presidential election in Belarus on August 9, 2020, to refuse to recognize Alyaksandr Lukashenka as the legitimately elected leader of Belarus;

(2) condemns Lukashenka's ongoing crackdown on members of the pro-democracy movement, senior members of the Coordination Council, peaceful protesters, employees from state-owned enterprises participating in strikes, independent election observers, independent journalists and bloggers, medical professionals, professors, teachers, athletes, and cultural leaders;

(3) continues to call for the fulfillment by the Government of Belarus of Belarus' freely undertaken obligations as an Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) member and accept the OSCE's offer to facilitate a national dialogue and fully participate in the OSCE process;

(4) calls for new presidential and parliamentary elections to be held in Belarus, conducted in a manner that is free and fair according to OSCE standards and under the supervision of OSCE observers and independent domestic observers;

(5) welcomes the United States Government's close coordination with the European Union, the United Kingdom, Canada, other allied and partner countries, and international organizations to promote the principles of democracy, the rule of law, and human rights in Belarus and encourages continued coordination to apply maximal pressure on the Lukashenka regime;

(6) continues to call for the immediate release, without preconditions, of all political prisoners in Belarus;

(7) welcomes the recent release of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) journalists Aleh Hruzdilovich and Ina Studzinskaya and calls for the unconditional release of all political prisoners and journalists detained on dubious charges, including opposition candidates Sergei Tikhanovsky and Viktar Babaryka, pro-democracy activist Maria Kalesnikava, and RFE/RL journalist Ihar Losik;

(8) condemns the forced diversion of Ryanair Flight 4978 to arrest Raman Pratasevich and his partner Sofia Sapega, which violated international civil aviation law and risked the lives of innocent passengers and crew, and calls for their immediate unconditional release;

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(11) calls on the Lukashenka regime to immediately halt exploiting and instrumentalizing migrants and to stop directing individuals to the borders of Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland;

(12) welcomes the Executive order announced on August 9, 2021, that applies additional sanctions on the Lukashenka regime and urges the Biden Administration to consider all economic, political, and diplomatic tools at its disposal to support democracy in Belarus;

(13) welcomes the European Union sanctions imposed on the Lukashenka regime and urges the United States to continue to coordinate additional measures with the European Union; and

(14) emphasizes that the United States supports the people of Belarus in their quest to maintain their sovereignty, choose their own leadership, and live in freedom, and recognizes the extensive efforts of the Belarusian opposition to coordinate efforts with the United States, the European Union, the OSCE, and the United Nations to bring free and fair elections to its people.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, today, the Senate will consider S. Res. 345, legislation I authored with Senator ROGER WICKER to bring attention to the people of Belarus and their pursuit of democracy. Since Alyaksandr Lukashenka egregiously stole the Presidential elections in 2020, we have witnessed a continued crackdown on the people of Belarus, who are being denied their basic human rights. After unjustly claiming victory, Lukashenka responded to peaceful, pro-democracy protests across Belarus with violence and oppression, throwing thousands of Belarusians in jail.

In May last year, his regime forced a commercial airliner flying between two

European states to land in Minsk so his security forces could arrest a journalist and his partner, an action for which the U.S. has charged four Belarusian officials with hijacking. Then last fall, his regime exploited vulnerable migrants by bringing them to Belarus and forcing them at gunpoint across the border into the European Union, leading several countries to declare a state of emergency.

These abuses are demoralizing to the Belarusian people, who keep up the fight to bring Lukashenka to account for his egregious behavior. But now, we are witnessing a new level of desperation by Lukashenka, who is supporting Putin in his campaign of aggression against Ukraine. He has endorsed Putin's agenda and invited Russian troops for major military exercises on Belarusian soil. Lukashenka has effectively given Putin permission to use his own country for a training ground to undermine a sovereign nation.

As Lukashenka supports Vladimir Putin's efforts to destabilize the democratically elected government in Kyiv, at home he has proposed a constitutional referendum that would allow him to stay in office indefinitely.

Indeed, life under Lukashenka is perilous. Today, there are more than 1000 political prisoners in Belarus, 1000 people imprisoned because of the insecurities of one man. I welcome the recent statement from the Department of State bringing attention to the ill treatment of these prisoners. And I call on the Lukashenka regime to release these prisoners without conditions and abide by their commitments to human rights as a member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Lukashenka has ruthlessly attacked independent media in Belarus, including Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, which he declared an extremist organization. Anyone who subscribes to RFE/RL can be arrested and jailed. RFE/RL's journalists who reported on the 2020 elections have been harassed, detained, arrested, and stripped of their credentials.

I want to highlight the stories behind the names of these journalists. They have been arrested and torn from family and friends indefinitely, simply for doing their jobs to shed light on the truth.

Ihor Losik was sentenced to 15 years in prison in December after a lengthy, closed door trial. Andrey Kuznechyk has been detained since November on unknown criminal charges. Aleh Hruzdilovich has been detained since late December for his reporting activities, after previously serving two stints in jail following the election.

The Lukashenka regime's cowardly attacks on the free press do not project strength. They show that regime is, in fact, weak, desperate and afraid of the truth. And the truth is—the Belarusian people want to live in a free country and choose their own future.

This is why I have been proud to lead efforts in the Senate to condemn the

actions of the Lukashenka regime and support the brave people of Belarus who continue to stand up to an increasingly autocratic government. Last year, Senator WICKER and I cofounded the Free Belarus Caucus to advocate for the pro-democracy movement and continue to push for free and fair elections in Belarus.

I have met with Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya numerous times and others from the Coordination Council who are leading the effort to bring a peaceful, democratic transition of power to Belarus. She is an admirable woman who did not seek the spotlight, but stepped up on behalf of her people when they needed her most. Her leadership is critical for the future of democracy in Belarus, and we must do everything we can to assist her and the Belarusian people.

And today, I am calling on my colleagues in the Senate to join me in supporting this resolution, which expresses solidarity for the Belarusians' pursuit of freedom and a future of their own making. As we work together to respond to Russian threats against Ukraine, we must not forget the plight of Belarusians. We must be steadfast in our strong support to those suffering under the rule of authoritarians. So I urge my colleagues to join me at this critical moment and support this resolution.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I further ask that the Shaheen amendment at the desk to the committee-reported amendment to the resolution be agreed to, and that the committee-reported amendment, as amended, be agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 4921) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To make technical amendments)

On page 13, strike lines 1 through 8, and insert the following:

(7) calls for the unconditional release of all political prisoners and journalists detained on dubious charges, including opposition candidates Sergei Tikhanovsky and Viktar Babaryka, pro-democracy activist Maria Kalesnikava, and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty journalists Ihor Losik, Aleh Hruzdilovich, and Andrey Kuznechyk;

On page 14, lines 8 and 9, strike "consider all economic, political, and diplomatic tools" and insert "consider further tools".

The committee-reported amendment, in the nature of a substitute, as amended, was agreed to.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I know of no further debate on the resolution, as amended.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the question is on the resolution, as amended.

The resolution (S. Res. 345), in the nature of a substitute, as amended, was agreed to.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported amendment to the preamble be agreed to; that the preamble, as amended, be agreed to; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The committee-reported amendment to the preamble, in the nature of a substitute, was agreed to.

The preamble, as amended, was agreed to.

The resolution, as amended, with its preamble, as amended, reads as follows:

S. RES. 345

Whereas the United States Senate has long maintained strong bipartisan concern regarding the troubling lack of democracy in Belarus, highlighted by the passing of the Belarus Democracy Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-347; 22 U.S.C. 5811 note);

Whereas the 116th Congress, as referenced in H.R. 8438, the Belarus Democracy, Human Rights, and Sovereignty Act of 2020, and Senate Resolution 658, which both passed with unanimous support, stated its deep concern regarding the fraudulent election in Belarus on August 9, 2020;

Whereas on September 17, 2020, the Moscow Mechanism of the human dimension of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was invoked by 17 participating states with regard to credible reports of human rights violations before, during, and after the presidential election of August 9, 2020, in Belarus;

Whereas, following Alyaksandr Lukashenka's inauguration on September 23, 2020, the United States, the European Union, numerous European Union member states, the United Kingdom, and Canada announced they did not recognize the legitimacy of the election results;

Whereas after the August 9, 2020 presidential election, the Government of Belarus responded to the resulting peaceful protests, the largest in the country's history, with a violent crackdown, including the detention of more than 10,000 peaceful protestors, according to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus;

Whereas the Government of Belarus, under the misrule of the Lukashenka regime, continues to engage in a pattern of clear and persistent violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms and disrespects the basic principles of democratic governance by subjecting tens of thousands of pro-democracy political activists, peaceful protesters, and ordinary citizens to harassment, beatings, abductions, forced deportations, and imprisonment and by committing acts of transnational repression to punish any dissent expressed by Belarusian citizens;

Whereas the Lukashenka regime continues to silence independent media, such as Nasha Niva, tut.by, and Belsat, and has unlawfully raided the offices of media outlets, including Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and arrested journalists;

Whereas on September 11, 2020, then-Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun said that "we stand by our long-term commitment to support the sovereignty of Belarus as well as its territorial integrity, as the aspirations of the Belarusian people to determine their own path remains in front of us";

Whereas on May 23, 2021, the Lukashenka regime forced a commercial airliner flying between two European Union member states to land in Minsk in order for the regime to arrest journalist Raman Pratasevich and his partner Sofia Sapega, a violation of international law resulting in near universal condemnation from the international community and coordinated sanctions by the United States, the United Kingdom, and the European Union;

Whereas on May 28, 2021, the White House announced the re-imposition of full blocking

sanctions against nine Belarusian state-owned enterprises and announced a new Executive order to increase sanctions on elements of the Lukashenka regime;

Whereas the Lukashenka regime has actively encouraged or forced at gunpoint more than 4,000 migrants from other countries to cross through Belarus into European Union member states Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland, amounting to people smuggling and obliging these countries to declare a state of emergency;

Whereas on June 9, 2021, the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate held a hearing regarding the political situation in Belarus, in which United States Ambassador to Belarus Julie Fisher testified that “Despite the oppression, the violence, and the turmoil that followed the events of the past year provide glimmers of hope. A new generation of brave Belarusians, with courageous women at the front, have emerged. They represent a Belarus determined to chart its own path. They represent a Belarus in which wearing a red and white dress, hanging a flag, or playing a particular song will not result in torture, forced confessions, or even death.”;

Whereas on July 27, 2021, President Biden met Belarusian opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya at the White House and declared that “The United States stands with the people of Belarus in their quest for democracy and universal human rights.”;

Whereas on August 9, 2021, President Biden—

(1) announced an Executive order authorizing the imposition of blocking sanctions on certain sectors of the Belarus economy, including the potash, tobacco products, and construction sectors; and

(2) pursuant to such executive order and Executive Order 13405, issued additional sanctions on Belarusian individuals and entities, including Belaruskali (a state-owned potash fertilizer company) and the Belarus National Olympic Committee; and

Whereas Belarusian opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya continues to represent the widely shared desire of the Belarusian people for free and fair elections and democracy: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) continues, on the first anniversary of the illegitimate presidential election in Belarus on August 9, 2020, to refuse to recognize Alyaksandr Lukashenka as the legitimately elected leader of Belarus;

(2) condemns Lukashenka’s ongoing crackdown on members of the pro-democracy movement, senior members of the Coordination Council, peaceful protesters, employees from state-owned enterprises participating in strikes, independent election observers, independent journalists and bloggers, medical professionals, professors, teachers, athletes, and cultural leaders;

(3) continues to call for the fulfillment by the Government of Belarus of Belarus’ freely undertaken obligations as an Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) member and accept the OSCE’s offer to facilitate a national dialogue and fully participate in the OSCE process;

(4) calls for new presidential and parliamentary elections to be held in Belarus, conducted in a manner that is free and fair according to OSCE standards and under the supervision of OSCE observers and independent domestic observers;

(5) welcomes the United States Government’s close coordination with the European Union, the United Kingdom, Canada, other allied and partner countries, and international organizations to promote the principles of democracy, the rule of law, and human rights in Belarus and encourages con-

tinued coordination to apply maximal pressure on the Lukashenka regime;

(6) continues to call for the immediate release, without preconditions, of all political prisoners in Belarus;

(7) calls for the unconditional release of all political prisoners and journalists detained on dubious charges, including opposition candidates Sergei Tikhanovsky and Viktor Babaryka, pro-democracy activist Maria Kalesnikava, and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty journalists Ihar Losik, Aleh Hruzdilovich, and Andrey Kuznechyk;

(8) condemns the forced diversion of Ryanair Flight 4978 to arrest Raman Pratasevich and his partner Sofia Sapega, which violated international civil aviation law and risked the lives of innocent passengers and crew, and calls for their immediate unconditional release;

(9) commends the bravery of Belarusians who have created innovative ways to protest Lukashenka’s autocracy and applauds the Belarusian diaspora’s efforts to maintain international focus on the deteriorating political situation;

(10) lauds the extraordinary support offered by the Governments of Lithuania, Ukraine, and Poland to support the people of Belarus, including support for the political opposition, accommodation of political refugees, and backing a free media;

(11) calls on the Lukashenka regime to immediately halt exploiting and instrumentalizing migrants and to stop directing individuals to the borders of Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland;

(12) welcomes the Executive order announced on August 9, 2021, that applies additional sanctions on the Lukashenka regime and urges the Biden Administration to consider further tools at its disposal to support democracy in Belarus;

(13) welcomes the European Union sanctions imposed on the Lukashenka regime and urges the United States to continue to coordinate additional measures with the European Union; and

(14) emphasizes that the United States supports the people of Belarus in their quest to maintain their sovereignty, choose their own leadership, and live in freedom, and recognizes the extensive efforts of the Belarusian opposition to coordinate efforts with the United States, the European Union, the OSCE, and the United Nations to bring free and fair elections to its people.

CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA BULLDOGS FOOTBALL TEAM FOR WINNING THE 2022 NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFF NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be discharged from further consideration, and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 496.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 496) congratulating the University of Georgia Bulldogs football team for winning the 2022 National Collegiate Athletic Association College Football Playoff National Championship.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I ask unanimous consent that the Ossoff substitute

amendment at the desk to the resolution be agreed to; that the resolution, as amended, be agreed to; that the preamble be agreed to; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 4922), in the nature of a substitute, was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Strike all after the resolving clause and insert the following: “That the Senate—

(1) congratulates the University of Georgia Bulldogs football team for a great season and winning the 2022 National Collegiate Athletic Association College Football Playoff National Championship game;

(2) recognizes the achievements of all players, coaches, and staff who contributed to the championship season; and

(3) respectfully requests that the Secretary of the Senate transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to—

(A) the President of the University of Georgia, Jere Morehead;

(B) the Athletic Director of the University of Georgia, Josh Brooks; and

(C) the Head Coach of the University of Georgia Bulldogs football team, Kirby Smart.

The resolution (S. Res. 496), as amended, was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, as amended, with its preamble reads as follows:

S. RES. 496

Whereas the University of Georgia Bulldogs football team (referred to in this preamble as the “Georgia Bulldogs”) went 14-1 during the 2021 college football season and won the 2022 National Collegiate Athletic Association College Football Playoff National Championship (referred to in this preamble as the “2022 National Championship”), defeating the University of Alabama Crimson Tide by a score of 33 to 18 at the Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, Indiana, on January 10, 2022;

Whereas this victory marks the first college football national championship for the University of Georgia since the 1980 college football season and its third national championship overall;

Whereas the 2022 National Championship was the 59th football bowl appearance and the 34th football bowl victory for the University of Georgia;

Whereas the 2021–2022 Georgia Bulldogs achieved a 14-1 overall record for the season, the most single-season wins in the history of the University of Georgia football program;

Whereas the 2021–2022 defensive unit for the Georgia Bulldogs allowed on average only 10.2 points and 153 opposing yards per game, making it one of the most dominant defensive units in the history of college football;

Whereas the 2021–2022 Georgia Bulldogs overcame a loss in the Southeastern Conference Championship to the University of Alabama on December 4, 2021, achieving a historic victory over the University of Alabama in the 2022 National Championship;

Whereas Georgia Bulldogs quarterback and Blackshear, Georgia, native Stetson Bennett IV, a former walk-on player and junior college transfer, demonstrated tremendous leadership and skill throughout the 2021 college football season, and was named the 2022 National Championship Offensive Player of the Game;

Whereas Georgia Bulldogs defensive back, Lewis Cine, was named the 2022 National Championship Defensive Player of the Game;